The Commonweal

December 3, 1948

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From Government to Opposition

WILFRID MEYNELL

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VOLUME XLIX 15c NUMBER 8

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The
COMMONWEAL

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Secularism

"HUMAN life centers in God." Unequivocally, hammer-on-anvil, the statement of the four Cardinals and the ten archbishops and bishops on "The Christian in Action" rings out in welcome directness. "The failure to center life in God is secularism," and secularism is "the most deadly menace to our Christian and American way of living." But defining and condemning are not enough. "Constructive effort is called for, to counteract this corrosive influence in every phase of life." From cradle to grave, secularism fouls the home, the school, the office, the State itself. And against it the Christian must engage the whole of himself, and the whole of his life. "Every day he must ask himself: 'What am I doing to build a Christian world?' " Total religious living, in the home, in education, in economic life, and in political life, is the only answer to secularism, as it is to communism, which is but one of the several branches of secularism.

The Founding Fathers, and the writers of the American Constitution, were religious men. As Mr. Justice Elsworth, in dismissing the freethinker Joseph Lewis' petition for discontinuance of the practice of "released time" in the State and City of New York, stated categorically, "the people of our country are predominantly a religious people. The Preamble to our State Constitution is in these words, "We, the people of the State of New York, grateful to Almighty God for our freedom. . . ."

And, as the Catholic bishops emphasize: "The American concept of government and law started with the recognition that man's inalienable rights—which it is the function of government to protect—derive from God, his Creator. The natural law, which is everywhere binding, includes, as Justice Elsworth pointed out, "the right of the parent to rear his child in a particular religious faith, or to rear him as a nonbeliever if he so elects." To jeopardize these rights, to suggest—as Arthur Hays does—that released time is "a bait to get the child to church" instead of a legitimate co-operation between State and parent in the delimitation of their various rights and spheres, is to go far towards a "judicial establishment of secularism." Such an establishment is both feared and foreseen by the bishops, and would be infinitely more unconstitutional than the use of a tax-paid schoolroom for the religious instruction of the children of God-fearing taxpayers. For the specific reason determining the insistence of the American lawmakers on the separation of Church and State was the avoidance of the establishment of any one church, or any national church, or any national faith. The latent danger of the establishment of secularism is a real menace to this careful prevision of the Constitution makers.

As Mr. Justice Black remarked in the case of Everson v. the Board of Education: "The language of the First Amendment commands that New Jersey cannot hamper its citizens in the free exercise of their own religion. That Amendment requires the State to be neutral in its relations with groups of religious believers and nonbelievers; it does not require the State to be their adversary. State power is no more to be used so as to handicap religions than it is to favor them."

Secularism, warn the bishops, is "preparing the way for the advent of the omnipotent State." It is a menace, not only to individual liberty, but to States' rights. For in overriding States' decisions on educational matters patently within their jurisdiction the secularist pressure on the Supreme Court has produced a judgment to comply with which, in its compulsory school system, the State must impose on all an exclusive secularism. In many countries today, Mr. Lewis states, and the bishops would here agree with him, "notably in Mexico and Russia, religion is regarded as distinctly detrimental to and inconsistent with patriotism or civic obligation."

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And any Russian official attending church would be expelled from the government, he comments. But where Mr. Lewis and the bishops would disagree is in the conclusion to be drawn. "So long as this is true," says Mr. Lewis, "it is impossible to hold that religious conscience, conviction and accountability are the least dispensable foundations for good citizenship and patriotism." The bishops take their stand upon the third article of the Northwest Ordinance, passed by Congress in 1787, re-enacted in 1790, and included in the Constitution of many of the States. This insists on "Religion, morality and knowledge *being necessary* to good citizenship."

The peril of secularism is pressing. Thirty years ago, the Lord's Prayer was as much part of every public school's daily program in New York City as was saluting the flag; now one has been taken and the other left. But it was surely not the purpose of Thomas Jefferson nor of any other of the Constitution makers, when insisting on the complete separation of Church and State, simply to suppress the former whenever the twain shall meet?

And that, as the bishops' forthright and comprehensive statement amply shows, is the point at issue between the secularists and society.

The Ruhr: Ownership, Supervision, Control

ARGUMENTS now running in the newspapers about the German heavy-industry area are stated in terms of "turning the Ruhr back to the Germans." That is the pleasant way it is stated, but one can also easily find things like "Ruhr Arsenal Turned Back to Nazis," or, "Centralized German State to Get Heavy Industries," or, "Americans ReBuild German Imperial Power." At this point we are unwilling to give a good, passionate title over information we have got from the public press. Most of the wanted information is doubtless ready for the asking in government offices, but the public debate seems to be going along nicely without bother about that.

For serious criticism, pro and con, of present American action in Germany, it would be convenient to have at least this: Just what previous agreements has our government entered into, regulating the business of the Ruhr? What consultations were held by American Military Government with the State Department and other branches of the civil government, and with the foreign powers concerned, like France? What actual commitments on the Ruhr question has General Clay's organization in fact made?

So this will have to be theoretical. As we understand it from the great press, action has been initiated to invest ownership of the principal coal and iron properties of the Ruhr area in twelve German trustees until an "eventual German government" decides upon permanent disposal. The pre-war Ruhr "cartel" has been judged to have included twenty-six giant coal and steel firms. Most of the pre-war owners of those twenty-six combines have been ruled out of future ownership because of participation in the Nazi and aggressive actions of Germany. The twenty-six firms have been broken up so that there will be eleven big steel companies, between fifteen and twenty big coal companies, and, in all, around 2,000 firms to take their places. The twelve German trustees are supposed to get production going strong, quickly, and, we suppose, the production is to be set in the framework of European recovery and the Marshall Plan.

The long-term decisions appear from this to be put off in the future, because it is not decided what the "eventual" German government shall be, nor what conditions will be imposed upon it in regard to setting up Ruhr industry when it takes over from the trustees.

The French speak furiously about the present action. They accuse us of turning over the arsenal of Europe to Germans, and, what they say is worse, to a central German government. (The English Labor Government, in course of nationalizing British steel, will hardly add this last reproach.) The French argument, and the criticisms of many Americans, seem to identify ownership, supervision, and control. Also, they identify radically the economic productive capacity of a nation with its political, war-making power. These flat identifications are not justifiable.

A civilian coal, iron and steel industry is *potentially* an armament industry. Actually, however, in order to turn out arms, the plants and mills and fabricators must be converted (for some reason they say "reconverted"). Militarily, this seems to present an adequate opening. The Ruhr industry could be watched and supervised by a small number of moderately trained men acceptable to the French, who would keep in touch with the product and destination of that industry. It could be made a crime to convert that industry so that it could turn out military material. When the supervisors reported something like that going on, a control force could be sent in to stop it and prosecute the criminals. The control action—or sanctions—should be kept as simple and restricted as possible, so that it would not involve national war and consequences so grave that the controlling governments (or UN) would hesitate to clamp down the control. It could be made a crime for individual persons to write letters or make designs or work at tools or do any of the other specific acts required to make over German productive capacity into means for armament. A small police force, equipped, perhaps, with some armored cars or tank com-

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panies or new-fashioned airplanes, could rush right in to haul on the carpet the actual individuals convincingly accused.

The general economic problem of Germany and of Europe is closely related to the arms problem, but it is a different and wider problem. The military, armament part should not be permitted to block the whole thing. It is impossible to settle the military thing now or ever, once and for all. France, and all the rest of us, must have resolution and the willingness to decide now and also again into the indefinite future. Supervision and control can never be spontaneous, but will always need an act. It would be positively dangerous to figure out some course now which we should believe settled the military problem for good. Inattention and relaxation would come, and then one fine day we would discover that the problem had not, after all, been settled, and the people who were not inattentive and relaxed would again have a pistol at our heads.

The Labor Honeymoon

IN POST-ELECTION jubilation, the President remarked, "Labor did it!" Ever since he threw this bouquet to American workers, there has been increasing speculation about the chances of a labor honeymoon in Washington. Recalling the "first hundred days" of the New Deal as the time of its most zealous reforms, both labor and management have been wondering how far Mr. Truman will extend his compliments.

Moving to take hold of their advantage, the AFL in Cincinnati and the CIO in Portland, Oregon, met in their annual conventions last week and spoke their minds on foreign and domestic politics. Both unions lined up behind the European Recovery Program, with the AFL endorsing a "defensive military alliance against totalitarian aggression"—an obvious reference to the forthcoming Atlantic defensive union; the CIO first staged a scrappy floor-fight against Communist fellow-travelers, threw out the New York Council, and then joined the AFL in support of the Marshall Plan.

On domestic issues, the two unions stood similarly on common ground: the AFL asked repeal of the Taft-Hartley Law; restoration of the Wagner Act—but in such a way that "public welfare as well as that of management and labor . . . must not again be placed in jeopardy by the irresponsible action of anyone"; Federal aid to education; roll-back of prices and installation of various economic controls on inflation; extended social-security legislation. Speaking for the CIO, Philip Murray proposed: repeal of the Taft-Hartley Law; restoring excess-profits taxes; rationing and allocation of essential materials, commodities and foods; cutting prices and increasing wages—with a wage floor of one dollar an hour; supports for farm prices; raising personal income-tax exemptions to free about twenty-five million people from tax payments.

Probably the most significant labor attitudes to come out of the two conventions were, in foreign policy, the breaking off of the courtship with communism, and in domestic policy, a more intense flirtation with modern statism and its controlled economy. Whatever management or anyone else may think of labor's chances to be successful with moderate socialism, no one could mistake the mood of unionists as overbearing or cocksure. Charles J. MacGowan, of the AFL Boilermakers Union, expressed the convention mood wisely enough: "I, personally, have been careful, in the flush of the November election victory, that the people not gain the impression that labor now is in an arrogant and vindictive frame of mind. Labor should use restraint in pressing its substitute legislation to the Taft-Hartley Act and should be alert to the excesses committed by certain segments of labor that put all of labor in the public doghouse."

Missouri's Springs

NOT the least of the results of the election is renewed agitation for a Missouri Valley Authority. In the Senate the fight is to be led by Senator Murray of Montana with Senator-elect Humphrey of Minnesota and Senator-elect Kefauver of Tennessee in close behind him. Senator Murray plans to introduce his third MVA bill—modified and improved—early in the next session. President Truman as Vice President once referred the MVA bill to a committee determined to kill it, but he has also expressed his interest.

Meanwhile the Army Engineers and the Reclamation Bureau are proceeding with their hated substitute Pick-Sloan plan. And in the course of "makeshift" attempts at flood control they are drawing up plans for dam and reservoir construction on the Current River. This would inundate entirely Round, Alley, Pulltight and other springs, and probably flood Big Spring for months at a time. According to the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch,* which has consistently supported MVA: "Big Spring is one of the most majestic, awesome and beautiful natural phenomena in Missouri. It is nothing less than a river boiling in blue-green fury out of the foot of a rock cliff. No one who ever saw it could ever forget it. There is nothing else like it in the United States. . . ."

But Missouri can do better than that if we can believe a recent advertisement: "On Election Day The-Man-Who-Didn't-Have-a-Chance enjoyed a Magic Mineral Water Bath and Miracle Massage at the famous Elms Hotel, Excelsior Springs, Missouri. You know what happened! You, too, can improve your luck and looks with a sojourn at America's No. 1 Spa. . . ."

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From Government to Opposition

The provocative move of Ivor Thomas, "crossing the floor" of the English Parliament, is chronicled by report and interpreted in interview.

"HON. MEMBERS: Speak for yourself. . . .

"Dr. Morgan: You are a dirty dog. (Interruption.)" (House of Commons: Extract from the Official Report).

It was Aristotle who distinguished between the occasions and the causes of war. The occasion of Mr. Ivor Thomas's breach with the Labor Party, in which he had served for many, many years—ever since his college days—in many capacities, including that of Under-Secretary for the Colonies, was the decision to go ahead with the nationalization of steel at this time. This seemed to him, he declared in the Debate on the Address, in reply to the King's speech (the official statement of policy for the Parliamentary year), a wanton and a reckless act, when there are such grave events abroad calling for rearmament, and when the balance of British payments is in jeopardy. In Mr. Thomas's views, the nationalization of iron and steel was mentioned in the Labor Party's electoral program, and this seems the main reason why the Government are going ahead with the measure. But the Parliament Bill (for curtailing the powers of the House of Lords) was not on the Labor Party's electoral program. Their program did contemplate a reform of the Lords: if they rejected a measure approved by the electorate, the Government bound itself to take steps to curtail the power of the Lords.

For example, if the House of Lords had rejected the nationalization of the coal mines, the Government would have been entitled to seek powers to amend the Parliament act and to have gone to the party if need be. "That seems to be the entirely proper constitutional doctrine," Mr. Thomas said. "We give clear notice that we will not tolerate obstruction of the people's will by the House of Lords." That sentence can only be taken to mean that if the House of Lords rejected measures appproved by the electorate, then the Government would seek powers to curtail the powers of the House of Lords. But "I certainly never conceived that there would be such a measure as the present Parliament Bill to curb the power of the House of Lords in anticipation," he declared. The following is from the record:

MR. THOMAS: In the past three years nationalization, economic planning, taxation policy and housing policy have all contributed to this result which I have mentioned: the concentration of power in the hands of the State and the weakening of the power of the individual. I do not say that this concentration of power has been deliberate and the most hon. Gentlemen opposite would be horrified if they could see the type of society they are unconsciously creating. They would deprecate it as strongly as the rest of us. If it was not the intention of Government policy it certainly has been the consequence of it, and it has now reached a point where it must give anxiety to all thoughtful men.

Let me say a few words under the various headings. First, I will deal with the Measures of nationalization. I am certainly not opposed to nationalization as such and, in answer to a recent interjection, I did, in good faith, pilot one nationalization Measure through the House. The attitude of sensible men in all parties has always been that the public ownership of any industry is a question to be considered on its merits in each case. In the case of all the Measures of nationalization so far carried out, I believe the reasons, on balance, were sufficient. Many hon. Members on these benches will not agree but I still think that, on balance, they were sufficient; I make no stronger claim. But the nationalization of iron and steel and the still wilder schemes with which some hon. Members opposite are toying—(Hon. Members: "Oh.")—are in a different class from the public utilities. I refer to such questions as the land, of course.

This strikes me as nationalization for the sake of nationalization. It is dogma run mad. To dislocate the iron and steel industry at this time, when the national need is so great, is something that I find very difficult to understand and, perhaps, later in the Session I may have more to say about that. On this occasion what I am disturbed about is the immense gathering of power into the hands of the State which these further measures of nationalization would give. It is not that the socialized sector of the national economy is yet so very great. I reckon that the capital value of the industries so far nationalized does not greatly exceed the figure proposed for capital investment for the next twelve months. But the nationalization of iron and steel, coming on top of all the other Measures we have had, will give the State a power of control over our economic life through the control of essential raw materials with

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which no persons, however well intentioned, or however competent, deserve to be trusted. Frankly, after the experience of the past three years, I have some doubts about both the competence and the intentions of right hon. Gentlemen opposite.

I am, however, much more disturbed by something other than nationalization. That is the economic planning to which our national life is subjected, this vague, amorphous . . .

DR. MORGAN (Rochdale): May I ask whether, in view of all the hon. Member has just said and the strict probity of his conscience, it is his intention to resign his seat forthwith?

MR. THOMAS: I have consulted the constitutional doctrine and the precedent set when the hon. Member for North Cornwall (Mr. Horabin) was received into the Labor Party. I do not find that the Prime Minister, in welcoming him into the Labor Party, raised any question of his resigning his seat.

I was beginning to refer to the vague, amorphous control exercised by the gentlemen known as the planners, who are trying to make a land fit for zeros to live in. In the sense of studying the trends of supply and demand, planning is, of course, essential to every business, but there is a difference between planning which seeks to supply what the consumer wants, and planning, with a capital "P," which tells the consumer what he ought to want. This is the Government's type of planning.

I was astonished some time ago to read of an answer given at a Press conference held by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who is very fond of Press conferences—like the Leader of the House who has just gone out. I read that someone asked a very sensible question, why we did not buy £10 million worth of goods from France, instead of lending France £10 million to help her out of difficulties. The Chancellor replied that France does not supply the things we want. I do not know if the Chancellor has ever drunk a bottle of claret or eaten a little Brie or Fontainebleau, but certainly France supplies quite a lot of the things I want. The Government's economic ideas in this field of planning remind me of the man who kept a donkey . . .

MR. SHURMER (Birmingham, Sparkbrook): We have let it go now.

MR. THOMAS: There are still plenty left. It grieved him to see the donkey eat so much food and he thought it would be an excellent plan if he could reduce the donkey's diet till, eventually, it could do without food. The plan went very well, but, just as he had accustomed it to doing without food, the donkey died. The poor British donkey is not dead yet. It is still allowed 81 percent of its 1938 imports and it is promised a "technically adequate," though "dreary," diet for the next twelve months. Perhaps in 1950, just before the General Election, it will get a carrot. If not, let the master take care, or the donkey may kick.

With nationalization, a man does at least know where he stands, or he would if the Government could make up their minds about the relationship between Ministers and public boards. But, with planning, nobody knows where he is—except that the private manufacturer would soon be in Carey Street, if he followed the same methods as Whitehall. If I were a private manufacturer, I should feel strongly tempted to say, "If you want my business, take it and pay me out; but if you do not, for heaven's sake leave me alone." But the itching fingers of the planners cannot leave well alone. Their grasping hands stretch far beyond the confines of industry to the man who wants to run up a building for himself and the woman who keeps a pig, or a few hens, in her backyard. The system is supported by elaborate private police forces, of which we all know in our constituencies; and this is not the least disturbing feature of the system.

In the past, some individuals—too few, perhaps—have been able to resist the encroachment of the State because they have retained in their hands the assurance of economic independence; and they have been nuclei round which others could gather. But, on top of the universal control of our economic life, the Government are now wiping out the last vestiges of independence by confiscatory taxation. Not the least of the services rendered by Lord Catto to the country is his blunt warning to the Chancellor that personal saving is incompatible with the present rate of taxation. The disastrous effects on the capital re-equipment of industry were seen between the wars, and the social consequences are no less disquieting. [An Hon. Member: "Between the wars?"] Yes, I said between the wars, deliberately. Saving was very much reduced even under the rates of taxation at that time. I say the social consequences have become no less disquieting. Hard work, thrift and honesty no longer pay. The paths of duty today lead but to the tax-gatherer's office. The incentive of financial independence, which has been the mainspring of our economic life for centuries, has disappeared, and nothing has taken its place. Those who have no savings see no point in trying to accumulate any; those who have, are encouraged to spend them before the tax gatherer gets hold of them. The Government have created a paradise for the football pool and the bucket-shop; but they have undermined the foundations of our industrial greatness.

I turn to the fourth aspect I have mentioned, housing policy. There has been one form of saving against which the Government have acted with a harshness peculiarly difficult to understand; that is the ownership of a man's own house. For a man to own the house in which he lives is an expression of his personality. It makes him independent and self-reliant; it gives him roots in the ground and makes him and his family a stable element in society. The building society movement, which has made this possible, is the finest social service of the century. But do the Government want their citizens to be inde-

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pendent and self-reliant? Or do they want them to be docile and obedient? Their housing policy would suggest the latter. They say to people without houses, "Only one of every four of you shall have a chance of owning his own house. The other three shall pay rent to the council."

MR. SHURMER: May I ask the hon. Gentleman how many people in his constituency can afford to buy their own houses at the present time?

MR. THOMAS: The building society movement is exceedingly strong in my division and in neighboring constituencies. I may say it is particularly evident in the West Riding of Yorkshire, where the virtues of industry and thrift that I have mentioned are still powerful. This policy has not only prevented the building of many houses which otherwise would have gone up, but it is turning the British working class, the finest working class in the world, into a proletariat.

If this analysis is true it is necessary to call a halt to the present drift towards the omnipotent State. We should aim not at the concentration of all power in the hands of the State but the widest possible diffusion of power. No Government, even though it were composed of angels and archangels—and certainly the present Government is not—can be safely entrusted in time of peace with the powers which the present Government seek to possess.

This wide diffusion of power can be achieved by refraining from further measures of nationalization, by making the planners our servants instead of our masters, by reducing taxation to a point where saving again becomes possible and by encouraging the widest possible ownership of all forms of property, and especially a man's own house. If I mistake not, this policy approximates to that which is described by the Conservatives as "A property-owning democracy," and by the Liberals as, "Ownership for all." Before either of them coined these terms a member of a Kensington family of house agents, Gilbert Keith Chesterton, a twin soul of that Belloc who was quoted just now by the hon. Member for Devizes (Mr. Hollis), had thought it all out under the name "Distributism," and how right he was! Is not this a far nobler ideal than the Great Leviathan which the Government are creating? Does it not correspond more closely to human nature? Does it not offer far better assurance for the individual than the all-powerful State?

If I mistake not also, there are many hon. Gentlemen opposite who, although they may not express themselves vocally or in the Lobby, share this ideal. But they are powerless within the Labor Party to halt the drift to the totalitarian State . . .

HON. MEMBERS: Speak for yourself.

MR. SHURMER: Do not be ridiculous. . . .

MR. THOMAS: . . . For long I hoped that a Labor Party, pledged to sensible courses of reform, would be the best bulwark against the evil flood of Communism. Today, I regret to see that it is no bulwark, but a leaky dam. For long I had hoped that the Labor Party would give political expression to those Christian principles on which our Western civilization is based. But I see that, whereas Christianity says, "What is mine is thine," right hon. Gentlemen on the Government bench say, "What is thine is mine." For long I hoped that the Labor Party . . .

DR. MORGAN: You are a dirty dog. (Interruption.)

MR. CHURCHILL: May I ask, Mr. Speaker, if it is in Order for an hon. Member to call another a "dirty dog?" I should like to be authoritatively advised.

MR. SPEAKER: I did not quite gather whether the hon. Gentleman was being called "a dirty dog" or whether it was some other expression. If the hon. Member for Rochdale (Dr. Morgan) did call the hon. Member for Keighley (Mr. Ivor Thomas) "a dirty dog" that should not have been said. It is out of Order and he should withdraw it. . . .

MR. THOMAS: . . . Gentlemen on the Government side are bent on leveling down, not leveling up. But the heart of the country is still sound, and when it again has good leadership it will recover its place in the world. Even though no leadership has come from Downing Street in the past three years, the authentic voice of Great Britain has still been heard—as it was heard, after Dunkirk, at Fulton, at Zurich, at The Hague and at Llandudno. And when that voice can again command action as well as attention, there will be a national revival which will astonish the world. (Interruption.)

MR. SPEAKER: It is most improper for him, Members to boo like that. It is most unparliamentary, and I reprove hon. Members for doing it.

*

Later, unheckled by his colleagues, Mr. Thomas has indicated his belief that it has always been the British way to make sensible reforms in time, and thereby prevent the revolutionary uprisings that have swept other countries. This was one of the most powerful arguments why the people should vote labor in 1945. But the capitulation of the Labor Party to its more extreme members and to communist pressure raises the question whether the Government is not really in the position of Kerensky's government in Russia. Labor members may recoil, as Mr. Thomas himself recoiled, before the conviction that their Government's policy was pointing towards the totalitarian state. They might even laugh at the idea that the Government's activities could lead to a totalitarian régime such as it cost so many lives to destroy in Italy, Germany and Japan. But when Mussolini began his rule in 1922 it was not easier to discern the lineaments of the totalitarian state. There was no guarantee in the fact that he had long been a Socialist. He, too, carried through many good reforms. But by the time it became clear to everybody that his rule was totalitarian, resistance was impossible.

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Mr. Thomas's conclusion has been that while he was powerless to check the tendencies he deplored from within the Labor Party, perhaps his going out would more vividly bring the dangers before them to his old comrades, then anything he could have said by staying in.

As a palace-revolution commentary on the current battle around iron and steel nationalization in Great Britain, Mr. Thomas's statement is probably unique. And this defection of an under-cabinet member from the Labor Party has drawn the clearest issue so far presented to the British people during the post-war, reforming career of the Attlee Labor Government.

Wilfrid Meynell

KATHERINE BREGY

I HAVE always had great respect for words, even for printed words. But there are times when everyone knows how right the poets are who insist it is what the word evokes—in memory or imagination—that really matters. Take the brief but somehow reverent notice which came over the wires from London on October 20th: *Wilfrid Meynell—husband of the poet Alice, discoverer of the poet Francis Thompson—dead at his Sussex home—in his 96th year. . . .* There snapped a bridge reaching all the long way from Newman to Ronald Knox or Evelyn Waugh! But it is not enough to think of him as patriarch of English Catholic letters. He was also the dear and quite unformidable patriarch of Pulborough in the shade of the Sussex Downs, where for so many years of war and peace he had lived surrounded by his precious books and trees and children and grandchildren. There at Greatham in the summer of 1935, I last said farewell to him and Viola, after the happiest of visits in that rambling and beautiful house which could conceivably have belonged to no one else. In every room hung a differing picture, usually with a few lines from the poems, of the Lady of his Delight; and over the fireplace were photographs of Thompson, of Meredith, of his own greatest friend of all, Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, the "uncrowned King of Sussex folk." But Wilfrid Meynell himself was the warmth of the hearth—that lonely man of eighty-three, who still kept for the world his gifts of wisdom, of love and of laughter.

My own introduction to the generous Meynell friendship shared by so many Americans had come years before, when I first visited London armed with a letter of introduction from Father John Burke, Paulist editor of the *Catholic World,* who had recently published youthful papers of mine on Francis Thompson and Coventry Patmore. This letter had been sent ahead from Paris but had somehow miscarried, and meanwhile I shifted hotels, so the last Sunday of my stay had come without reply. Then, on my return from Mass at the Oratory, I found a note delivered personally by Mr. Meynell—how like him to take the time and trouble to track down an unknown American girl!—inviting me to dinner that evening. The famous Palace Court residence was temporarily leased and the family installed in the Portman Square flat high over Burns and Oates' publishing house, where Wilfrid Meynell was acting as literary adviser. I arrived breathless in more ways than one after the long climb, and saw at the end of the drawing room Alice Meynell sitting in the dusk by an open fire. She struck me as half like Queen Alexandra and half like a Pre-Raphaelite angel, with the deep eyes of a saint or a sibyl; and I think my romantic imagination was not far wrong in immediately adopting her as a symbol of the Lady Poetry. But it must be admitted the lady was a little silent in her graciousness, a little remote and *distraite,* speaking and thinking in what Thompson had called "her own high, reticent way." Everard was there; so were Monica, wife of Dr. Saleeby, and the young esthetic Francis, now head of the Nonesuch Press. But it was the ubiquitous, solidly built, serenely exuberant husband and father, Wilfrid, who thought always to tell the personal story one longed to hear, to read aloud from the priceless Thompson manuscripts with their little sinister smudges of laudanum, to show the pictures one wanted most to see. Among these last was the exquisite Sargent drawing of his wife, now in the National Portrait Gallery of London. When he gave me a copy—it hangs above the desk as I write—I remember asking also for one of his own. His answer was characteristic: "No, my dear—I have too much sense of proportion!"

There, to an extent I couldn't, of course, guess at the time, sounded the keynote of his life. It meant humor, which he had often in its most puckish and punnish form. And it meant humility, that rarest of masculine or even feminine virtues. Above all it meant a realistic but tender understanding of human nature and human values. What it all added up to was *service*—the ideal of going through the world *not to be ministered unto but to minister.* Later I learned how rightly proud Wilfrid was of what he called the long "tradition of service" in his Yorkshire family. He liked to remember that his great-grandfather, William Tuke, had worked as tirelessly to better the condition of the insane in England as Pinel had in France; that a grandfather had labored with Wilberforce for the freeing of British-held slaves, while a banker uncle was zealous in relieving the Irish famines of his time. Naturally or supernaturally enough the young Wilfrid, growing up in the very radiance of England's

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"Second Spring," claimed at eighteen his home in the Catholic Church. A few years later he had begun his journalistic career and was living in London with Father Lockhart, sharing the latter's work among the poor of St. Etheldreda's. Then in 1876 he happened to read a sonnet beginning, "My heart shall be thy garden," in the newly-published *Preludes* of Alice Thompson. They soon met, and in spite of some parental reservations seem to have recognized each other as mates almost immediately. By November of the following year they were married and began a life rich in experiment and fulfilment. It was a rather heroic partnership in the art of living, and until the final years a partnership in unceasing labor, too.

★

"How wise is she who chooses not only her husband but her children's father," wrote Alice Meynell with subtly Christian undertones. And as the musically christened children increased—Everard, Sebastian and Francis Meredith, Monica, Madeline, Viola and Olivia—the parental pens brought their indomitable music to the task of bread-winning. The mother was incorruptibly a "poets' poet," writing for a small, high audience and contradicting all the charges of sweetness and sentimentalism and ornateness often brought against women versifiers. She had from the first the praise of the fastidious few: but if there came a day when her vogue threatened, in Max Beerbohm's phrase, to become "a sort of substitute for the English sabbath," it was largely because of her distinguished prose essays appearing through many years in the *Spectator,* the *Saturday Review* and other élite journals. Meanwhile Wilfrid's more popular gifts had been preempted by Cardinal Manning for the Catholic apostolate, and in 1881 he began to edit the *Weekly Register.* Two years later the young editor launched a second magazine, *Merry England,* in which art and literature marched shoulder to shoulder with Christian democracy, the revival of the peasantry and other brave ideals of the Young England Movement. Patmore, Manning, Wilfrid Blunt, Katharine Tynan, Lionel Johnson and Belloc were among its contributors, while Meynell himself hid behind many aliases. But *Merry England's* unique claim to immortality came in the April of 1888, when it published the first poem by Francis Thompson.

All the world knows by this time the story of the penniless medical student, sick and disheartened, who sent his shabby manuscript to the editorial office in a last desperate hope—and then vanished. The indefatigable Wilfrid Meynell searched London until he found the pathetic derelict who was to prove one of the supreme poets of modern England: won for him the separate healings of hospital and monastery, and brought him into the home which was to be his intermittently for almost twenty years, and where he found the inspiration of the woman he adored and praised as few have been since Dante's Beatrice.

There must always be a delicate and precarious problem when a man of extraordinary taste and talent is husband to a woman of extraordinary charm and genius. Wilfrid found the solution because of that almost divine "sense of proportion"—perhaps also because of his strong personality and consciousness of vocation. It is not enough to say that he was apparently incapable of jealousy on either the emotional or the professional plane: he was actually more eager for his wife's praise, more patient with her adorers than she herself. To him came the magnificent Meredith, the sensitive and autocratic Patmore, with complaints of temporary misunderstandings with their goddess. And while Mrs. Meynell seems to have been a bit bored by the sometimes inconvenient devotion of the poet whom Viola describes as their "gentle, late, voluble, flushed, dozing visitor of every day," her husband never wearied until he saw the stranger and pilgrim safely off for the "nurseries of Heaven."

Meanwhile Wilfrid's own poetic gift was held in constant abeyance, and to his best collection he would allow no more ambitious title than *Verses and Reverses.* Yet there is more than a touch of profundity beneath much of this prolific verbal playing—surely in that late poem, "Transubstantiation." And all the delicacy of his attitude toward his poet-wife is whimsically caught up in the lines "To Her: at Pisa." Saluting there his

> finished Tower of Womanhood,
> Rooted and fast in Nature's good
> Yet reaching, flower-like, to the skies,

he protests:

> Thou can'st withstand the straitest siege,
> Nor asketh aid of this thy liege,
> Alone thou risest in thy power:
> Yet be towards me a Leaning Tower!

Any woman could compute the human comforting of such chivalry from husband and lover. Any psychologist would recognize that shade of overpraise which generates the power it believes in. The man was past master of persuading people first of their own ideals, then of their power to reach them. It must have been a kind of sublimated sympathy, for it transfigured equally his personal relations and his literary work. It is the delightful and distinguishing marks of the various biographies, of such modest but tenderly patriotic volumes as *Aunt Sarah and the War,* of what Mrs. Meynell once called "the dear, pathetic, witty paragraphs" of his religious journalism, and of his impeccable editing of her own and Thompson's collected works."

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To a bishop friend Francis Thompson confided his belief that Wilfrid Meynell had "done more than any other man to educate Catholic literary opinion" in the England of his day: adding "I was myself virtually his pupil and his wife's long before I knew them." And Thompson was a sound critic as well as a superlative poet. What he could scarcely have guessed was how long the Meynell day was to last, or how many lesser writers were to be fellow-pupils as the years wore on. One of them, today, pens these pages in remembering affection for the man who always *gave* so colossally to his friends—and then signed his letters "Gratefully yours." . . .

The Stage & Screen

Bravo!

BY ORDINARY commercial standards, the team of Edna Ferber and George S. Kaufman ought to be justifying the title of their piece. Certainly these two writers have a good deal of successful practice behind them; they're experts in every branch of formula writing; they have never exhibited any pretensions to profundity or daring. Perhaps they're just tired, for, it is necessary to remark, their play is pretty much of a fumble. The story exposes a brownstone house in the West Sixties in this city, peopled by a group of European refugees whose several talents do not seem applicable to the American dollar-dream. A celebrated Judge peddles candies from this shabby setting, a Prince cooks, a famous Playwright plays a shaky piano, a great Actress fails as an extra, and a Duchess sews. Here is surely a design capable of wit, gayety, sorrows—in short, all the *pathetique* of an explicitly lost world. And I am uncertain whether to place its failure upon the fatigued engineering of the authors, or upon what I can only call a misconception of their own theme. What they seem to be doing is to bewail the romantic view of life—circa Vienna, 1848. They have hinged their plot to the character of their Playwright, a man who has made millions out of multiple froth and who, as played by Oscar Homolka, is rather more lumbering than witty. The "fame" of this character (he is always exposed rather than proving himself), is expected to make us feel the appalling lag in our cultural apprehensions. We ought, one supposes, always to be able to waltz. Or better, we ought always to be able to believe in the supreme value of the waltz, without any history or geography attached. Coffee and blintzes are supposed somehow to represent culture to us; nostalgia, civilization (there is undoubtedly a play in a conscious grasp of this idea); and reputation, achievement. Of course, what all this adds up to is noise; there isn't one universal at stake in the play. If the authors had seen fit to hero their Judge, instead of their fabulous Showman, I feel they would then have dealt in sense and reality. But it is

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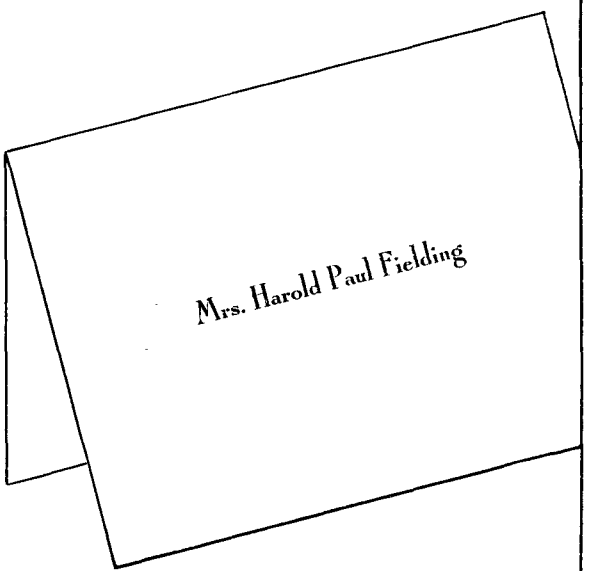

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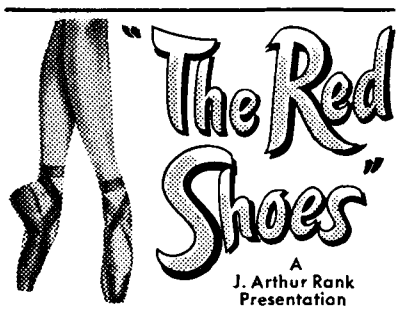

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In THE COMMONWEAL Next Week

Some Questions About Industrialism
Philip Burnham

American Catholic Essayists
Anne Fremantle

fairer to imagine that they had presumably no wish to wrestle with facts and that their mistakes are due simply to a present lack of facility.

In respect of players, I would like to underline that Mr. Homolka is somewhat less annoying than usual. He is still not completely audible, and I do think he is miscast as a man of charm unless charm should consist of a jagged hair-do and the gait of a grizzly. Lily Darvas as the Wife supplies a human dimension to the evening. Hers is a warm and a warming job. Other than this, I guess Mr. Bernard Baruch ought to be cited for allowing himself to appear circuitously on the telephone and thereby having brought down the most wasted final curtain of the season. (*at the Lyceum*)

Goodbye, My Fancy

DUE to two specially noteworthy acting jobs, Fay Kanin's play makes a pleasantly inconsequential evening. Miss Kanin gives us a present Congresswoman, returning to her college for a reunion in order publicly to receive an honorary degree, and privately to discover whether her first love, the current President of the place, is still worth her whole time. The business embraces lots of girlish fanfare, a rigmarole with *Life* magazine, and perhaps the silliest final curtain I have seen, barring the above-mentioned opera. Two phenomena are worth mention in the author's scheme. The first will be that however sophisticated she is, it is obvious she hasn't been near a girls' college for the past decade: all of her youngsters go on like kindergarteners, and all I can wish for her enlightenment is a weekend at Bennington, Vassar, Sarah Lawrence or the like. The second hurdle is somewhat subtler, in that Miss Kanin has honestly not managed a conflict at all. The crux of her plot hinges on the heroine's choice between her college prexy and the youngish *Life* photographer, with whom she has also had erstwhile dealings. But there is honestly little choice between these two men: one is committed to holding his job at the cost of any idea; the other is occupied with getting his gal at the cost of the largest amount of liberal hooey lately pronounced from the boards. In the meantime, the business slowly spins because Madeline Carroll in the lead, and Shirley Booth as her flat-footed Secretary, deliver exactly the jobs one would expect. Miss Carroll is enchanting and Miss Booth is wonderful, and I don't know that we could ask for anything more. Sam Wannamaker dispenses a somewhat smoother directing job than is his wont, and the Oenslager set is appropriate. (*at the Morosco*)

Light Up the Sky

THE trivialities of Moss Hart's signal offering were such as to keep a crowded house and the allowed amount of standees roaring heartily during three usual acts. An intermittent sign-working blimp also kept the Street on edge on opening night, I understand. Mr. Hart examines the workings of a theater opening of what he calls an "allegory" on a first night in out-of-town Boston. The scene is the Star's suite at the Ritz in that city, and here the author opposes the opinions of a sincere young Playwright (adroitly handled by

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Barry Nelson) to those of the backers of the show. In the end, the raves of the local critics force the money-men to concede, although the young wrighting warrior has already made up his mind to compromise. All very important. I think there was a play here, if ever we could have learned what the "play" in the play was about; but the author has studiously avoided this point, and all we get are a number of hilarious gin-rummy scenes taken over by Audrey Christie and Phyllis Povah, and an incessant portrait of Billy Rose (as Crosby says, "whoever he may be!") played by Sam Levene. Virginia Field fills the female Star's part nicely and Glenn Anders sidles through a pretentious Director with the expected amount of swish. I feel the only conclusion to draw from the proceedings is that the Broadway theater, in the hands of one of its most successful, most analyzed, most promoted practitioners, is just about as ridiculous as he has portrayed it. (*at the Royale*)

KAPPO PHELAN.

How the Other Half

THREE recently imported films are on the docket for this week, and one has to admit, whether one is tired of Hollywood's slickness or not, that it is interesting to see and hear what the foreign movies are up to.

"Monte Cassino," an import from Italy, tells the World War II story of the famous abbey that stood from 529 when it was built until 1944 when bombs crumbled its walls. In spite of the fact that Producer-director Arturo Gemmiti approached his subject matter very sentimentally at times and introduced a few cloying touches, the picture is genuinely moving. Its strength lies in the fine shots of the abbey itself and in the sincere performances of the men who portray the Benedictines. The other characters, mainly the Germans and the Italian civilians who live outside the abbey and later seek protection within its walls, are somewhat on the melodramatic side and they are rather obviously actors overwhelmed by this big drama which they are re-enacting. The film makes clear that the Allies warned the Abbot (excellently portrayed by Alberto C. Lolli) of the bombing and its necessity, and that the Germans prevented its inhabitants from escaping. Although at times the picture's continuity is vague, "Monte Cassino" successfully puts over a message of brotherhood and faith, and is reassuring in its promise that love will rebuild every crumbled wall.

Another Italian import with English subtitles is *"Four Steps in the Clouds,"* a movie that starts out as a comedy and winds up as a tender little study in compassion. The first part is a satire in the Rene Clair manner about a traveling salesman (Gino Cervi) who leaves his bossy wife early one morning to hit the road with his wares. After a train and bus ride that verge on the slapstick, the salesman becomes friendly with a young lady who is going home with tears in her eyes because she is going to have a baby—and is not married. She finally persuades the salesman to pose as her husband just for a couple of hours before he disappears; and when this soft-hearted man tries to help the girl out, he gets into a peck of trouble; but he does manage to teach her family a thing

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or two about kindness. The characterizations in this little piece are exceedingly well done; and while you may think its people are not always behaving wisely, you will agree that they are behaving like people.

"Dulcimer Street" is another of those cross-sections of lower-middle-class life that the English send over every now and then to acquaint us with their people. Because it has many characters most of whom live in a made-over house at 10 Dulcimer Street and because it has many slightly connected scenes that tie these characters together and reveal what these people are really like underneath their cliche-ridden exteriors, it may remind you of such Noel Coward movies as "In Which We Serve" or "This Happy Breed." Its main difference is that Director Sidney Gilliat does not look down his nose at people (even though he laughs with and at them) and he is not madly waving a Union Jack. The bits of plot run from hilarious comedy to tragedy; and what the movie lacks in unity it makes up for in entertainment values and good acting. Alastair Sim, Joyce Carey, Richard Attenborough and Fay Compton and many others are in this cast that looks and acts like people who might live at 10 Dulcimer Street and do the foolish and funny and sometimes wrong things that these people do. PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

It Takes All Kinds

WAYNE ANDREWS

AS MANY of us realize, nearly every article in nearly every one of our mass circulation magazines might as well have been written by one and the same person, so undistinguished is the prose of most of our expert journalists today. If anyone objects that the product is professional, we shall have to agree, but not without uttering a deep sigh over what we might as well call the total absence of personality in the pages of our national weeklies. Of course the journalists themselves aren't really to blame for the impersonality of their point of view; forced in many cases to rely for their facts on a staff of researchers, they are often as not even more remote than their readers from the scenes they describe.

But if we haven't any good reason to be critical of what is turned out once a week, we have at least the right to expect something more of a bound volume, and even to hope that facts will be arrayed in startling new perspectives in our histories and biographies. Which brings us to the case of Douglas Southall Freeman, who has just published *The Young Washington* (Scribner's, $15.00), the first two volumes of a six-volume study of our first President. Though Freeman has been heralded in the newspapers as an historian in the highest tradition of scholarship, many of us will be deeply disappointed with his 1013-page examination of the first twenty-seven years of Washington's life, and not a few of us will decide that what has been publicized as a *magnum opus* is an appallingly impersonal contribution to American history, and what's more, ranks no higher as a literary effort than the average Ph.D. dissertation. We might, perhaps, excuse Freeman's failings as a craftsman if we were, even for a paragraph, conscious of a new and valuable interpretation of any aspect of Washington's career; unfortunately, his conclusions are merely trite. Summing up his findings at the end of the second volume, Freeman can only report that "Washington had been able to assume responsibility" and so on.

If *The Young Washington* is to be accounted a failure, the Carnegie Corporation must assume much, if not all, of the blame; when Freeman, a Rockefeller trustee, hesitated to accept a Rockefeller grant, the Carnegie Corporation generously provided a $23,000 fund for research. Every penny of the $23,000 has been spent, and well spent, as is only too obvious to anyone who pores over the millions of footnotes in *The Young Washington*. But if a biography is to be something more than a recital of the contents of a hundred thousand cards from a card catalogue, the author must first of all digest the material he has collected. And there is no evidence that Freeman has taken the time to think through any episode in Washington's life.

Good history is not necessarily entertaining; no one would maintain that Philip A. Bruce's comprehensive volumes on Early Virginia are as lively as an evening at a Cole Porter show. But Bruce, unlike Freeman, was completely the master of his subject, and no fact in Bruce is irrelevant to a serious student of Virginia life. Whereas the details in Freeman's fourth chapter, "Virginia During the Youth of Washington" are as meaningless as a waste-basket heaped high with the tired typewriter ribbons of the author.

If only Freeman had thought more and said less; if only he had paused for a second to contemplate Washington's career in its eighteenth century setting! If he had been more reflective he might not have been guilty of the peculiar paragraph in which he sketches the world at large in the year of Washington's birth—a paragraph in which he retails the names of the Duke of Marlborough, Louis XIV, Robert Walpole, Montesquieu, Bach, Handel, Watt, Lavoisier, Frederick the Great, Haydn, Reynolds, Wesley, Dr. Johnson, and Franklin with such unmeaning emphasis that the exasperated reader can't help feeling it's a pity the author's kittens didn't tear his copy of Ploetz's *Manual* to bits.

Followers of Freeman who believe that history is history and that wit is out of place on the printed page will no doubt be distressed by Richard Hofstadter's *The American Political Tradition and the Men Who Made It* (Knopf, $4.00). As deft as Freeman is ponderous, Hofstadter is no respecter of persons, and dares to suggest that Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation "had all the moral grandeur of a bill of lading." But let no one think that Hofstadter is a superficial historian; the twelve essays which make up *The American Political Tradition* are as profound as they are provocative.

So sharp that he might be mistaken for a cynic, Hofstadter is too penetrating to dismiss any politician with a mere portrait of his foibles, and if, in his summary of Lincoln, he gives an unwonted attention to his inconsistencies, he tells us the whole of his tragedy in so few words that we are bound to ask why Sandburg had to write six volumes. "As the months passed," Hofstadter notes, "a deathly weariness settled over him. Once when Noah Brooks suggested that he needed a rest, he replied: *I suppose it is good for the body. But the tired part of me is inside and out of reach.* There had always been a part of him, inside and out of reach, that had looked upon his ambition with detachment and wondered if the game was worth the candle. Now he could see the truth of what he had long dimly known and perhaps hopefully suppressed—that for a man of sensitivity and compassion

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to exercise great power in a time of crisis is a grim and agonizing thing. Instead of glory, he once said, he had found only *ashes and blood*. This was, for him, the end product of that success myth by which he had lived and for which he had been so persuasive a spokesman. He had his ambitions and fulfilled them, and met heartache in his triumph."

Hofstadter on Lincoln challenges many of our preconceived notions of the War President; but he is no less stimulating when he takes up the Founding Fathers, whose trust in property rights he correctly emphasizes, or when he probes, incidentally not without pity, the optimism of Thomas Jefferson. When he comes to Jackson, whose career he identifies with the rise of liberal capitalism, he retells the familiar story of his life with such a keen instinct for what's most dramatic that every reader will be grateful to find that in the very next chapter he sets the stage for John C. Calhoun, whom he labels, not unaptly, the Marx of the Master Class.

Perhaps the warmest of all the essays is that devoted to Wendell Phillips, whom Hofstadter salutes as "a thorn in the side of complacency." Equally perceptive is the dissection of the Age of Cynicism, and Hofstadter is not afraid to observe that Grover Cleveland was, after all, "a taxpayer's dream, the ideal bourgeois statesman of his time: out of heartfelt conviction he gave to the interests what many a lesser politician might have sold them for a price."

If the chapters on Bryan, T. R., and Wilson are rather familiar in their emphasis, the examination of Hoover is one of the deeper delights in store for readers of *The American Political Tradition*. After giving the Great Engineer all his due, Hofstadter cannot help adding that "there are times when nothing is more misleading than personal experience, and the man whose experience has embraced only success is likely to be a forlorn and alien figure when his whole world begins to fail."

But perhaps the very finest writing in *The American Political Tradition* concerns Franklin D. Roosevelt, about whose achievements it is so difficult to be objective in 1948. Alert in recognizing F.D.R.'s triumphs, Hofstadter never stoops to malice in speaking of his mistakes, and yet at times he is intensely critical of the President's fondness for personal solutions of intellectual problems.

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and discerning use of the written records. But the force of the work is the reproduction in forty-nine standard black and white plates (from Alinari, Anderson, etc.) of Ravenna monuments, and their thorough analysis by Mr. von Simson. San Vitale and Sant' Apollinare in Classe preserve for the generations an extraordinary picture of "Byzantium" under Justinian. Primarily through the superb architecture and resplendent mosaics of these two churches, the author traces the sacred and secular thoughts and experiences which were already fused into the powerful, millenial culture of the Orthodox East.

Then, in the radiant basilica of Sant' Apollinare Nuovo, we discover a tremendous statement of the Catholic Church of Rome, and of the nascent civilization of Europe and the West. "Were the two artistic programs conceived as rivals?" Von Simson indicates the likely answer is, yes. But without assuming certainty in regard to ancient, conscious purposes, he shows clearly how within this generally similar-appearing art of Ravenna, there are two diverging religious and political and cultural currents whose separation remains one of the great facts of human history. Both currents were mighty with transcendent truth and with the fruit of men's necessities, and their divergence appeared mostly as matters of emphasis, different stresses, and, at first, close dogmatic theological conceptions, which later ages have difficulty in recognizing as supremely important.

Von Simson does not explore the monuments of Ravenna much in their artistic and technical styles and aesthetic accomplishments. The photographs do well to indicate their quality, anyway. The book is chiefly devoted to study of the political and the liturgical functions and meanings of what can be seen in the beautifully preserved Adriatic capital. The Transfiguration is taken as the great symbol of Byzantium, and the Epiphany as sign of Rome and the West (awe, perhaps, and active, communicating charity). *Sacred Fortress* develops impressively the religious meaning, in doctrine, worship, devotion, intuition, experience, which these Christian monuments transmit from the sixth century.

It is very rich, enlightening, and very inspiring. But perhaps there is too much tone of surprise in the presentation of the fulness and spiritual vitality of the Christian art and liturgy. The subject is not as remote as the Preface would give away. Indeed, the Preface is the most difficult part of this book. In the body of the work, the author seems to present the *living* worship and faith and an extraordinarily vital art which expresses them; but his opening remarks appear to pre-classify Christianity as an archaic "dream," and its first great art as a lovely game of hieroglyphs. It may be a matter of an over-subtle objectivity of style; or else a not altogether unusual, but nevertheless always disturbingly strange instance of a man who enters, ably and seriously, into the Christian tradition as a student who can enlighten the most faithful, while himself reserving a position outside that faith he so well appreciates. The Preface is built, confusingly, if perhaps appropriately, around lines from Yeats' superb "Sailing to Byzantium":

> Consume my heart away; sick with desire
> And fastened to a dying animal
> It knows not what it is; and gather me
> Into the artifice of eternity.

Is it an "artifice," only? And were Byzantium and its western rival only "motivated by dreams," as the Preface,

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in simple interpretation, says? Is Ravenna surrealist? An ambiguity unbalances the book's broad and deep statement of the content of Christian art and worship.

PHILIP BURNHAM.

Crusade In Europe. Dwight D. Eisenhower. Doubleday. $5.00.

COMMENTING on the failure to recognize the profound truth in von Clausewitz's principle that war is merely a continuation of political intercourse, Walter Lippmann once said that that failure had led the people to "entrust the conduct of war to soldiers who do not understand politics, and to leave the arrangement of peace to politicians who do not understand war."

Fortunately, the first part of that judgment did not hold true for a number of American military leaders in the recent war, probably the most notable of whom has written a "personal account" of the historic politico-military undertaking he commanded to victory over the brutal tyranny that had all but throttled Europe.

General Eisenhower did not choose the title *Crusade In Europe* casually, or for mere effect. For throughout this classic work of modern military history by a great soldier and a great citizen, one cannot escape the deep-rooted conviction of the author that the stake of the battle was human dignity itself, and that his rôle was simply that of a servant of the free peoples who fought for it. No soldier of Eisenhower's command who thrilled to the welcome of the liberated people of Europe, or who choked with horror and shame for the human race at the sights of Buchenwald and Dachau, will question his description.

Patiently, dispassionately and often in the slightly rigid style that characterizes military orders and reports, Eisenhower gives a panoramic view of an operation that staggers the imagination with its problems and complexities. And just as calmly he outlines the terrible burden of responsibility that rested almost constantly on his shoulders for three years, a responsibility involving thousands of lives and the very future of the world. Some of his decisions will undoubtedly be disputed among military men in the years to come. His personal integrity, his over-all strategical and tactical genius, his devotion to the high purposes of his mission, can hardly be questioned.

To anyone who participated in, directly or indirectly, or even publicly discussed the great assault on Festung Europa, this book must give pause. Generals and privates who cursed the next high headquarters, scoffed at their allies, and swore their outfit could have captured Berlin single-handed with a little consideration from SHAEF, will, if they are honest, backtrack in all humility in face of the "big picture" revealed here. Less to be expected, but none the less due, are *mea culpas* from the coffee-cup commandos and propagandists-turned-tacticians, who campaigned so energetically from their editorial rooms. The "second-front" enthusiasts of June, 1942, might compare the number of American combat divisions in Britain, two, ready to fight at that time as revealed by Eisenhower, with the twenty, superbly equipped and trained, we had ready to put into the field on D-Day.

But lifting examples or trying to quote from this brilliant account is almost like tearing threads from the Bayeux tapestry in order to analyze its beauty. Compressed and compact to the point that it must treat some of the most thrilling actions and hair-raising adventures

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of the war in a paragraph or two, this book is rich in lessons and satisfaction, for soldiers, statesmen, and plain citizens of every country. One hopes, even prays, that the lessons are beginning to penetrate in the capitals of the world, particularly in our own. PAUL FARRELL.

Great Paintings In America. Selected and Interpreted by Fiske Kimball and Lionello Venturi. Coward-McCann. $20.00.

THE jacket—gaudy blue surrounding Titian's lush "Rape of Europa"—is misleading; it gives one to expect a collection of popular-poll masterpieces accompanied by condescending commentary; a publisher's project for the holiday trade; a twenty dollar showpiece to display on one's parlor table beside the latest book-of-the-month.

Great Paintings In America is, certainly, a volume which would grace anyone's table, as well as an ideal Christmas gift. Likewise it is directed toward a wide public. But it never truckles. Lionello Venturi's commentaries which face the 101 color reproductions are readily comprehensible to the general reader without assuming him to be either babbitt or moron. Confined in each case to a single page, they manage to pack in pertinent physical facts concerning the painting, a brief history of its ownership, biographical notes about the artist, a critical interpretation, and beyond all that relate each painting to period and tradition, so that the sum constitutes a concise history of the development of western art.

This, of course, Venturi could not have done if the reproductions were not selected to cover each of the salient periods and areas, and most of the dominant practictioners, of occidental painting. Fiske Kimball, Director of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, assisted Venturi in the selection of paintings, and contributes a short, acute, anti-academic introduction. Examples selected range from Byzantine to Marin; are located in twenty-five collections from California to Rhode Island.

Relying principally on memory of those of the originals which I have seen, it seems to me that the reproductions are remarkably faithful, although the necessary use of hard, shiny coated paper in some cases falsifies. In theory, one would expect the more linear painting to reproduce best, the more tonal worst. And yet, for example, the golden chiaroscuro of Rembrandt's self-portrait in the Frick Collection, New York, comes through superbly, while the stylish shallowness of the English portraitists is unfairly exaggerated.

One is tempted to linger over each painting in turn. But this is a book to look at (again and again), not to describe. DAVID BURNHAM.

The Quest for Love of Lao Lee. Lau Shaw. Reynal & Hitchcock. $3.00.

THIS novel has all the ingredients of a third-rate melodrama—the misunderstood husband, the drab, unimaginative wife, the pretty woman next door, the villain who gnashes his teeth, a series of minor governmental officials (all petty and nasty, of course) and even a murder. It is a whole gallery of boorish people and their narrow lives, their stories connected by the fragile device of all the men working in the same office, all of them concerned more or less grimly with the problem of marriage in modern China.

The Lao Lee of the title is the central figure, but by no means is his story the only one. While Lao Lee frets about his marriage, about the way he is unappreciated, about his poetic soul and the need for romance in his life, the reader is also introduced to Big Brother Chang, an arranger of marriages, whose son is in prison and whose daughter is succumbing to the wiles of the villain, Small Chao; to Big Fist Wu who is contemplating divorce; to young Mrs. Ma, whose husband deserted her; to a host of characters either insignificant or important, but all irritating. Each is labeled with a term which clings to him throughout the book—"square Mrs. Wu," for example. The only character who achieves reality is Second Master Ting, the one who has the least self-respect.

It is a pity that the second novel by Lau Shaw to be published in this country should be so inferior to the first, *Rickshaw Boy*. While the first one had power and beauty, this has neither. The writing is uneven, colorless, and the use of the metaphor is so consistent that the reader finds himself looking warily for each comma to be followed by "like . . ."

Happy Boy, the Rickshaw Boy, would not recognize his own creator. ELIZABETH ANN COOPER.

Three Who Made a Revolution. Bertram D. Wolfe. Dial Press. $5.00

THIS is really an important book. It blends together the biographies of Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin and brings their stories up to the outbreak of the First World War. A second volume continuing them up to our day is supposed to follow. Contrary to most popular western books on modern Russian history *Three Who Made a Revolution* does not take Soviet information at its face value. It goes into a critical research of biographical features, finds that one book copied from another, and sometimes what was copied was completely legendary. The author has consulted, during the ten years of his research, all the Russian material available, even that printed in obscure party magazines. Furthermore, he has enjoyed the friendly cooperation of many Russian scholars, historians and philosophers, and examined many unpublished documents referring to the history of his heroes. Thus Mr. Wolfe's book has to be evaluated as a critical history of developments, which the present Government of Russia tries to obscure for political reasons. It is a further step on the line which Boris Souvarine opened with his ground-breaking biography of Stalin.

It is impossible to praise, in a short review, the many instances in which Bertram D. Wolfe has repudiated false statements and produced a sounder version of the facts. We can emphasize only a few interesting points.

In most biographies of Lenin one never learned that the founder of the Bolshevik state had been what the Communists call a "Kulak," the owner of an estate of about 225 acres, with a mill and a "manor house." When her son was expelled from Kazan University, his mother purchased this estate at Alakaevka, near Samara, for the price of 7,500 rubles.

Why do the Soviet biographers omit to mention that Lenin spent the years between 18 and 20, a very important period indeed, as a landowner? They only say that he went to Alakaevka "to spend the summer" or do not mention at all this miserable village. They did not dare to reveal that Lenin was for a brief period an exploiter of peasant labor.

But the official retouching of Lenin's biography is harm-

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less when compared with the purposeful fabrication of Stalin's alleged biography. The versions which he has invented himself and which are beyond any criticism for loyal Soviet citizens, contradict even well-known and elementary facts. Though records have been destroyed, altered and suppressed, though his opponents and even comrades of a lifetime have been silenced by fear or just been "liquidated," some of the falsifications are shown up by Wolfe. The author wonders why there was so much ado about German book burnings but so little international excitement about the Soviet elimination of essential records. Many an account, once declared official, has been publicly denounced or quietly withdrawn in favor of a more propagandistic version within a year. Wolfe shows how Stalin's comrades were forced to produce the memoirs favorable to his hero-worship. From the conflicting accounts of his break with Seminary and the invention of his alleged participation in actions and meetings with which he had nothing to do, to the systematic falsification of his relations with Lenin, the official biography of Stalin is a challenge to truth. Wolfe is able to show how Stalin handled the facts, and mostly also what motives prompted him to do so. Even in details where Wolfe may have erred, his keen criticism of the official Stalin biography must produce a wholesome discussion and bring to light new facts and new problems.

Bertram D. Wolfe is a born American, who since the first revolution of March, 1917, then a student of 21 years, became keenly interested in the development of Russia. He is one of the few Americans who masters the Russian language; he lived in Moscow for over two years and knew personally most of the idealists and gangsters that figure in the pages of his book.

As an American, Wolfe never gets lost in the labyrinth of Communist intrigues and party struggles. He looks at the events from a distance and never loses the thread of historical continuity. Despite the many critical details, the 650 pages of his book make fascinating reading, full of tension and useful stimulus. MAX FISCHER.

The First Holy One. Maurice Collis. Knopf. $3.75.

"CHINA, where there had never been a Savior, but only a heaven unrevealed and a cult, the aim of which was to demonstrate, not how to get to heaven, but how to behave on earth, not how to become God, but how to become a gentleman." It is the history of this cult—or rather its position in the history of China—of which Mr. Collis writes. It is of Confucius himself he writes, and of the great religions that came to threaten Confucianism in China.

To tell the whole story of his philosophy, which was to take such a hold in the Chinese soil that it became, to outsiders at least, almost a part of the Chinese character, is an undertaking of some magnitude. Confucius lived in 500 B.C. The book ranges from the Sainted Emperors of Antiquity around 2200 B.C. to the present republic. With this somewhat nebulous wealth of material to choose from, Mr. Collis has written a most readable, if eclectic, history. "Far flung and loosely hung"—there are gaps of centuries—nevertheless, the detail is chosen with taste, both from the point of view of entertaining reading and of relevance to his theme.

It is the vicissitudes of Confucianism and its conflicts with other philosophies that draws his attention. In brief but pungent comparisons with Buddhism and Taoism

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the author is almost at his best. The ideas of Confucius are clarified. And thereby hangs a twofold implication —its insufficiency and its strength. With this, I think, the author was much concerned. It is a "plodding, middle way," and one can almost say it gathers strength from its insufficiency—or at least numbers. A code of compromise and caution and comfort, it can appeal to a great many people. And it has, throughout the centuries.

The whole is very well written, in a style that is good enough to be unobtrusive. The impartiality of the author, the fact that so much ground is covered in a personal but charming way, is apt to leave the reader with a rather generalized—dare I say vague?—impression. Yet this drawback is small compared to the reward of the book and the interludes on the way. To see China through the eyes of this man is, no doubt, to come close to the real thing. And there is a good word to be said for its pleasing design and the photographs which illustrate it.

ANN HUNTER.

The Season's Books

NOT LONG after the Thanksgiving turkey has been put away, that old pressure of so-many-days-till-Christmas sets in. The problem of what to get for everybody from junior to grandpa exerts a tighter and tighter tension the closer we get to the deadline. Often enough, books are an easy way out of the dilemma, since there *are* books for everybody from junior to grandpa; frequently though, books are more than that—they are simply appropriate and stimulating gifts.

But whatever the reason we have for giving them, it is a standard practice by this time, and around the book counters in most big stores during the December rush, people gather to mull over the problem while Santa Claus takes care of the children. To help you with your mulling this year, we submit here a brief word or two about many of the books whose colorful jackets you will be seeing on the counters. Some of them may be just the thing. By no means is this list exhaustive, nor does it constitute a critical appraisal of what's been going on for the past year in the literary world. These are just some timely books, suitable, perhaps, for giving this Christmas.

Fiction

The Plague. Albert Camus. Knopf. $3.00. An outbreak of a plague in North Africa and its effect on leading individual characters and society as a whole is the subject of this impressive artistic whole. M. Camus is not sparing of feelings, and the actors in these harrowing scenes make a tremendous impact.

Two recent historical novels are unusually interesting, too. *The Corner That Held Them, by Sylvia Townsend Warner* (*Viking,* $3.00), is a highly poetic and genuinely realistic picture of several decades in the life of a fourteenth century English convent—beginning with the black death and the welcoming of a supposed priest as chaplain. The dominant mood is a blend of childlike interest in the great wide world and sardonic humor. *The Meek Shall Inherit, by Zofia Kossak* (*Roy,* $3.00), is a much more religious novel and deals with a Polish knight in the seventeenth century.

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Dr. Faustus. Thomas Mann. Knopf. $3.50. In this monumental story about a German musician, Thomas Mann spreads himself in discussing all manner of ideas, musical, philosophical, theological and political. Naturally this theorizing impedes the development of his story. But it is the sort of thing that some readers like.

The Heart of the Matter. Graham Greene. Viking. $3.00. This study of hyper-sensibility to one's neighbor's unhappiness, and of evil, is not Mr. Greene's most successful artistic achievement, but it is a powerful study of temptation and progressive decline. There is little terror and violence, yet the tragedy here is more harrowing than in many more widespread human cataclysms.

The Loved One. Evelyn Waugh. Little. $2.50. This brief, humorous and telling satire on Hollywood and its most famous burial ground is entertaining indeed.

I Capture the Castle. Dodie Smith. Little. $3.00. For sheer amusement—the story of an eccentric English family and their adventures in an ancient English castle.

First Citizen. Richard Sullivan. Holt. $3.00. A novel in which character study is uppermost and the leading figure is a man on the make—yet, because of the understanding way in which he is drawn, is a person with whom it is difficult not to have some sympathy.

All Hallows Eve. Charles Williams. Pellegrini and Cudahy. $3.00. This novel of the supernatural (the heroine is dead before the book begins) introduces to an American audience one of the most profound of recent English thinkers.

All Your Idols. Harry Sylvester. Holt. $3.50. The best of Mr. Sylvester's published short stories, most of which, although appearing to conform to popular magazine pattern, embody something of substance.

The World Is A Wedding. Delmore Schwartz. New Directions. $2.75. A mood of flatness and dreariness is consciously evoked by the able author of these connected sketches dealing with the frustrations and aspirations of young people today in a big metropolis.

Politics

During the past few months volumes have been accumulating to build up a definitive picture of World War II. Four of them are particularly notable: *History of the U.S. Naval Operations in World War II (Volume III, 1941 to April, 1942). Samuel Eliot Morison.* (Little, $6.00); *The Gathering Storm. Winston Churchill.* (*Houghton,* $6.00); *Roosevelt and Hopkins. Robert E. Sherwood.* (*Harper,* $6.00); *Crusade in Europe. Dwight D. Eisenhower.* (*Doubleday,* $5.00). Each of these in its own way has authenticity, style and importance in itself.

Conservation has also come to the fore in recent months. The most provocative of volumes in this field is *Road to Survival, by William Vogt.* (*Sloane,* $4.00). Scientifically and, probably emotionally, this volume is less sound than Fairfield Osborn's *Our Plundered Planet.* (*Little,* $2.50) which was published early in the spring, but Vogt has succeeded in calling the widest attention to the ravages Americans have been wreaking on their magnificent natural resources and the possible results of such exploitation. From a rather special but not unsignificant angle, Arthur P. Chew in *Plowshares Into Swords.* (*Harper,* $3.00) confronts the general problem. He sees the pressure on the world's limited food resources as a pressure of industrial nations on predominantly agricultural ones. His solution is not restriction of population—or even soil

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conservation—but better distribution to industrialized regions of the foodstuffs that are normally available. Persuasive as his argument is for making American surpluses available at below parity prices and on a somewhat permanent basis to industrialized Western Europe, such a plan would encounter terrific opposition in this country.

Among other important books in this general category which might constitute a substantial Christmas gift for the right person are:

The West at Bay. Barbara Ward. Norton. $3.50.
Politics in the Empire State. Warren Moscow. Knopf. $3.00.
Essays on Freedom and Power. Lord Acton. Beacon. $5.00.

History

A large scale project in the field of American history has been completed by Scribners with the publication of *Album of American History, Volume IV, End of An Era, Editor-in-Chief James Truslow Adams* ($7.50). The volume contains numerous photographs and captions all about William Jennings Bryan, Teddy Roosevelt, Wilson; industrialization, mechanization, and the face of the country in those days up to 1917. These albums are related to Scribner's "Atlas of American History," "Dictionary of American History" and "Dictionary of American Biography."

As Luck Would Have It. Otto Eisenschiml and E. B. Long. Bobbs. $3.00. Is an expert sidelight book on chance in the war between the States.

The Autobiography of Benjamin Rush. Edited by George W. Corner. Princeton. $6.00. Contains two first person works of great interest in the period from the Revolution to 1813, written by an intelligent and observant doctor of the period.

The Legacy of Sacco and Vanzetti. G. Louis Joughin and Edmund M. Morgan. Harcourt. $6.00. Covers capably the subject of the title.

The intellectual history of America has been elaborated during the season by several important works. There is *The American Political Tradition and the Men Who Made it, by Richard Hofstadter* (*Knopf,* $4.00) and *Seeds of Liberty: the Genesis of the American Mind, by Max Savelle* (*Knopf,* $6.50)—both of them very rewarding reading.

Further away and longer ago is *The Pageant of India's History, by Gertrude Emerson Sen* (*Longmans,* $4.50). This well-written and well-presented volume takes one pleasantly about half-way through India's history.

City of the Tsar: Peter the Great and the Move to the West (1648 *to* 1762). *Harold Lamb. Doubleday.* $4.50. This is Mr. Lamb's pageanty follow-up of his "March of Muscovy," and it does give a lot of Russian history with a high proportion of pleasure to pain.

Stalin and German Communism: A Study in the Origins of the State Party. Ruth Fischer. Harvard. $8.00. Brings the history of Muscovy down and out much nearer. It is a necessary scholarly work.

From France, M. André Maurois has exported a mild but clear and thoughtful history, *The Miracle of France, translated by Henry L. Binsse* (*Harper,* $5.00).

About France, is *The City and the Cathedral: Paris and Notre Dame in the Colorful Thirteenth Century Period. Robert Gordon Anderson.* (*Longmans,* $3.50). Perhaps rather much of a muchness and somewhat of an

The book that's just right for Christmas 1948 and for every Christmas to come

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over-endorsement of the high Middle Ages, but a good and colorful book on the subject.

Religion

A book for Christmas which THE COMMONWEAL recommends with serene security is The Old Testament. This winter we are thinking particularly of The Old Testament, translated into modern English by Ronald Knox. *Vol. I, Genesis Through Esther. Sheed and Ward.* $7.50.

The New Testament is likewise on the market, and of the editions available notice is called to the *Westminster Version, Cuthbert Lattey, S.J., General Editor. Longmans.* $4.00.

Every home should own a Bible, and after that, Christian homes could hardly be better enriched than by a library of the great, classical masterpieces of the Church. New, American translations, conveniently presented without overwhelming scholarly apparatus, are offered by two developing projects: Ancient Christian Writers: Newman Bookshop of Westminster, Md.; and The Fathers of the Church: Cima Publishing Co., Inc. of New York City.

The Catholic and Thomist will be delighted by *Compendium of Theology. Herder.* $4.00. This is Saint Thomas's own "digest," translated by Cyril Vollert, S.J.

The Works of John Henry Newman. Edited by Charles F. Harrold. Longmans. $3.50 each volume. To the seven fine volumes already out, Longmans adds this fall two more—of "Sermons and Discourses."

Meditations for Everyman. Joseph McSorley. Herder. Vol. I, $2.50; Vol. II, $2.75. Daily meditations, and quotations, fitted to the cycle of the ecclesiastical year, by the experienced and well known Paulist leader.

A book, small, very pretty and quite contemporary, to average out some of the weight of the above is, *The Seven Miracles of Gubbio, and the Eighth: A Parable. Raymond Leopold Bruckberger, Dominican. Translated from the French by Gerald Lauck. Illustrated by Peter Lauck. Whittlesey.* $1.50. This is an allegory and a wolf story, based on the Fioretti, written in the monastery of St. Maximin, France, and published first in *Le Cheval de Troie* of Paris in 1947.

Theodore Maynard has a new biography of Saint Francis: *Richest of the Poor. Doubleday.* $3.00.

Golden Legends. Collected by Samuel Cummings. Pellegrini. $4.00. These are 45 religious stories, from that of Joseph, in Genesis, down in time to the current day. Some of the authors are unexpected sources for religious stories, which itself adds to the interest and charm of this volume.

The Mass of the Future. Gerald Ellard, S.J. Bruce. $4.00. Father Ellard has long been a vigorous leader in making our worship fuller, deeper and more alive. This fine work presents his ideas and hopes centered around the people's participation in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

The Death of Socrates. Romano Guardini. Sheed. $3.00. The eminent priest and scholar and writer of the German "liturgical movement," reveals here thoughts and ideas in, and connected with, the Platonic Dialogues which insure his position as a great and attractive Christian writer of this day.

The Meaning of Man. Jean Mouroux. Sheed. $4.00. This excellent translation by A. H. G. Downs, gives us an opportunity to enjoy in lucid English an important and very French approach to the spiritual and psycho-

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logical problems of the human person at this particular moment of history. An admirable example of French powers of analysis and synthesis.

Paradoxes. Henri du Lubac. S. J. Fides. $.50. A wise and stimulating brief collection by one of the intellectual leaders of post-war Catholic France.

Biography

The Seven Storey Mountain. Thomas Merton. Harcourt. $3.00. Thomas Merton, who took a good look around the streets first, came to the end of his personal anguish and quest in a Trappist monastery. This is a moving, honest record of an interior search for peace, finally fulfilled in the life of supernatural grace.

Meredith. Siegfried Sassoon. Viking. $3.50. Mr. Sassoon is the sort of biographer who sees his man objectively, without idolatry or over-excitement. He catches the man Meredith expertly—his wit, ideas, verbosity, self-esteem, satire.

Henry David Thoreau. Joseph Wood Krutch. Sloane. $3.50. First of the American Men of Letters series, this is a well-balanced *tour de force* on the man of Walden. Mr. Krutch presents an intricate and philosophic personality, with incisive simplicity.

Edwin Arlington Robinson. Emery Neff. Sloane. $3.50. An enthusiastic tribute to the American poet who, as Robert Frost once observed, "stayed content with the old-fashioned way to be new" in a twentieth century of literary experimentation. Able critical examination of the poetry.

Young Mr. Newman. Maisie Ward. Sheed. $4.50. The early years of John Henry Newman come to life remarkably, giving us for the first time an inside view of the formative period of his life. Gracefully, warmly written.

Diary of Pierre Laval. Scribners. $3.50. The French collaborationist left his own defense-case behind in the notes published here. He comes off as a little man who guessed wrong, and who later received summary treatment at the hands of passionate countrymen.

Wobbly. Ralph Chaplin. University of Chicago. $5.00. Reminiscences by a crusader in the rough-tough organizing days of the Industrial Workers of the World. *Wobbly* is an extremely engaging account of the violent struggles, without any loud-mouthed overtones.

Search For A Soul. Phyllis Bottome. Reynal Harcourt. $3.50. Miss Bottome examines "childhood as the workshop of the soul" and discovers, on her own experience, that the early years must be understood before we can hope to know much about adult personality. Close, psychological portrait of the author's family life.

Family Circle. Cornelia Otis Skinner. Houghton. $3.50. A pleasant combination of family history and typical Skinner witticisms. Here she is at her best telling about the early training of her matinee-idol father, Otis Skinner.

Poetry, Journals

Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins. Oxford. $3.50. The first really representative edition of Hopkins' work, which is English poetry at its best.

Figures For An Apocalypse. Thomas Merton. New Directions. $2.50. This later poetry of Merton's relates with emotional power his spiritual odyssey from New York to a Kentucky monastery.

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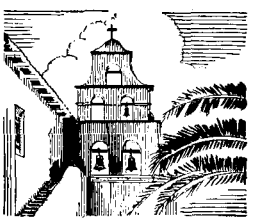

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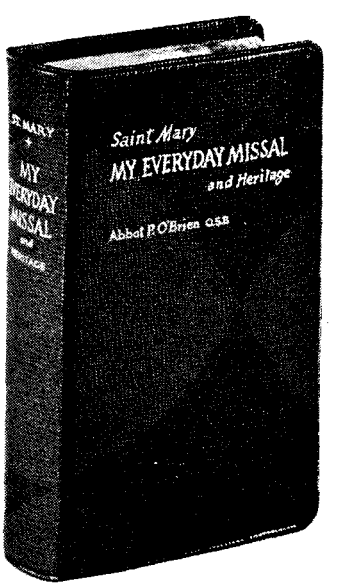

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A Celebration For Edith Sitwell. Edited by Jose Garcia Villa. New Directions. $1.50. A series of critical and reminiscent essays on the poetic and social career of one of England's leading modern poets. Tribute from Sir Osbert Sitwell, Stephen Spender, Gertrude Stein, among others.

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A Chilmark Miscellany. Van Wyck Brooks. Dutton. $4.00. Excerpts from various already-published works of Brooks, most of it dealing with literary culture and writers in New England and the South.

Literary History of the United States. 3 vols. Edited by Robert E. Spiller, etc. Macmillan. $20.00. Several scholars of American literature contribute to this impressive historical examination, complete with elaborate bibliographic references. A very thorough job.

A Literary History of England. Edited by Albert C. Baugh. Appleton. $10.00. Including the index there are 1,637 pages to this book, all of them in clear and pleasant type. The Old English Period (to 1100) is treated by Professor Kemp Malone; the Middle English Period (1100 to 1500) by the editor; the Renaissance by Tucker Brooke; the Restoration and Eighteenth Century (1660 to 1789) by George Sherburn; the Nineteenth Century and After (1789 to 1939) by Samuel C. Chew. Since no one man could possibly read all of English Literature or be able to discuss it all in detail, this is a joint endeavor. It is an extremely successful one, giving the political and social background against which the books were written and which they do so much to explain, quoting from them generously, and maintaining throughout its several sections a high degree of readability.

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This & That

Item 1. See this week's reviews.

Item 2. Specifically. *Christmastide: A Catholic Treasury for Young and Old.* (Edited by William J. Rohrenbeck. Stephen Daye. $3.75.) Furthermore, *Fireside Book of Yuletide Tales.* (Edited by Edward Wagenknecht. Bobbs. $4.00.)

Item 3. Do not forget bargain editions, or let the public blame itself. The reprint, less expensive, and cheap-editions publishers are developing their wares, adding titles and trying hard to sell them. They wish Americans were a book-reading people, and they give us one less excuse for not being.

There are numerous uniform format series of books being published, most of them capably edited and excellently produced. Notable are the *Hyperion* artbooks published by Crown, and the *Phaidon* art editions published by Phaidon-Oxford. Look over the regional Rivers, Lakes, Trails, and "Country" series, which do not have to be recent to be highly interesting to those interested. Viking's *Portable Library* calls special attention to itself; Doubleday's *Masterwork* set of digested classics by categories is growing. The Hafner *Library of Classics* offers an increasing number of the whole works; Coward-McCann has a good *Invitation to Travel* series. The increasing number of "topographical" books being brought to this country by *Batsford* deserves special notice, for the books, mostly about English countryside, houses, history, art, are in themselves beautiful, well written, competent and with high atmosphere; and also, the publishing project is such a very good one, and imitable here.

For the trade (for the profession) (writing, printing, publishing), consider *The 26 Letters.* (Oscar Ogg. Crowell. $3.50.) *Words Into Type.* (Marjorie E. Skillin, Robert M. Gay and other authorities. Appleton. $5.00.)

Biggest: *The Homebook of Proverbs, Maxims, and Familiar Phrases.* (Stevenson. Macmillan. $20.00.)

Of Flight and Life. (Charles A. Lindbergh. Scribners. $1.50.) This has interest from many approaches, including those of action and contemplation which singular airmen seem singularly able to combine. *What Is Man?* (C. F. Ramuz, translated by C. G. Paulding. Pantheon. $2.75.) Wise and Christian musing of a writer who has always observed wide and far from the simple Alpine country which his novels have made pleasingly familiar.

We are glad to suggest H. V. Morton's *In Search of South Africa* (Dodd. $4.00.) on the record, although to be responsible, it is too new for us to have read. We have just looked at *American Folk Art.* (Jean Lipman. Pantheon. $7.50.) and it is certainly attractive.

The Guest Room Book ("assembled" by F. J. Sheed. Sheed. $3.50.) A book for the bedside table which may not lengthen hours of sleep, but guests will prefer it that way. *Birds Over America,* by Roger Tory Peterson, the renowned Field Guide naturalist (Dodd. $6.00) is also, we think, a grand guest room book for those who have guests in the country.

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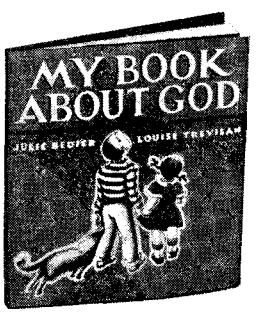

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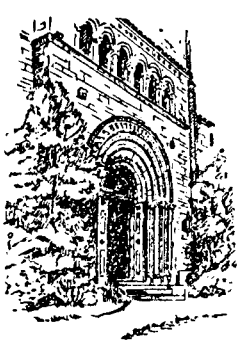

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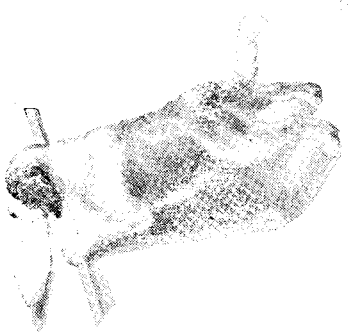
Messiah. Julian Herbage. Chanticleer. $2.00.

MR. HERBAGE became preoccupied with the mechanics and the history of Handel's best-known work in editing it twice for anniversary performances, the first editing job being lost in a Nazi bombing. This could be called a little book, since it has only seventy-two pages, but it also has seven color and thirty-four black and white illustrations of the period; it is standard in height and width, and then who needs more than seventy-two pages to appreciate, as far as one may in words, even the story of Mozart's Fortieth? But this is Handel, and he will come to life more for many in this brief and special study than in most longer reading experiences. The book was printed in Holland, brought out in London by Max Parrish and published here as an import.

JOHN BRUBAKER.



Leo, the St. Bernard—Lippincott

A Few Children's Books

An Inheritance of Poetry. Collected and arranged by Gladys L. Adshead and Annis Duff. Houghton. $4.00.
American Folk Songs for Children. Arranged by Ruth Crawford Seeger. Doubleday. $4.00.
A Rocket In My Pocket. Compiled by Carl Withers. Ill. by Suzanne Suba. Holt. $3.50.
Summer Green. Elizabeth Coatsworth. Ill. by Nora Unwin. Macmillan. $2.00.

GLADYS ADSHEAD and Annis Duff have brought together an anthology of English verse, traditional words to songs, and passages from the King James version. As one whispers to one's self or reads aloud, shouts loud and louder or chants low by radiator or fireside, the richness of time and places, the great inheritance of the English language strikes home to the heart. How seldom do we give thanks for it, and commit lines to memory, or let ourselves invent and communicate our own sparks. The radio *might* have served us. What commercial interest and ill-regard for both language and audience prevent our learning of our heritage? Is it not timid leaders, rather than vulgar people, who reject the best?

"Poetry should surprise by a fine excess and not by singularity; it should strike the reader as a wording of his own highest thoughts, and appear almost as a remembrance." One does not like to disagree with Keats. Yet singularity is often pleasing when not too strained for; and listening is better than reading. Not all poems, maybe even only a few, are suitable for broadcasting. Yet by turning over an hour day after day, and month after month, could not an audience be created to welcome our poetic heritage and accept riches far greater than give-away gadgets?

This summer I visited a friend whose tutor, when

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she was a very little girl, had made her learn three poems a week; now, fifty years after, as naturally as breathing, she came out with remembered bits, all woven into daily living, not whole poems, of course, but a phrase here, an image there, pronounciation perfect, rhythm in her voice. A little mnemonic training in one's youth might be better than a tardy college course in English literature.

Ruth Crawford Seeger, as mother and school teacher, contributes a little gem of child study, as well as study of the uses of rhythm and end rhymes in getting life lived easily and excitingly. She has a great deal to say about children's right to a folk inheritance; and the tunes she has set down are some familiar, and some new and special.

A Rocket In My Pocket is just that, a rocket, and it fits anybody's pocket. Mr. Withers has collected four hundred jingles, chants, tall tales and riddles, tongue-twisters and verbal banter from all over this country. Children use their own folklore to celebrate seasons, secrets, and just plain being alive and skipping. For them no imaginary line or iron curtain between what is traditional and what pops into their heads. They just blow words up like bubbles and chew on them like gum, call names with words and call tunes. Miss Suba's Thurber-like sketches have the same sort of pied piper lure as the words.

Elizabeth Coatsworth's *Summer Green* holds a mirror to the joys of life. No living poet has contributed so steadily to the children of her time. "She sings like the wind in the trees. She always sees everything first." I see no harm at all in little Babs's odd feeling that she *may* have written some of the poems herself, she recognizes their occasions so well.

ERNESTINE EVANS.

The Stars In Our Heavens. Peter Lum. Illustrated by Anne Marie Jauss. Pantheon. $3.75.

IT WAS on a freighter making its way with slow and steady chug and taking three months from Shanghai through Suez to New York, that Peter Lum conceived the idea of writing about the stars. Her book is a special sort of introduction to astronomy, one of the oldest studies, most beautiful pleasures, and most peaceful pursuits in human history. Can you not imagine Peter Lum, daughter of an artist who lived many years in the Orient, watching the stars at sea? Feeling much as the ancients did who made myths out of the patterns of the firmament, and understanding as well the freighter captain's celestial navigation instruments? The book has been years in the making. The perfect illustrator, Anne Marie Jauss, says that fifteen years of living in Portugal, where no smoke ever obscures the skies, may be responsible for her feeling for the blackness of the night and the brightness of night's stars. The Etruscans, the Romans, the Chaldeans,

Smudge—Harper

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the Egyptians have all made myths about the skies, looked there for signs and portents, discovered there, time and space and the great rotations.

The Stars In Our Heavens is by no means simply a children's book. E. E.

Verdi, Force of Destiny. Dana Humphreys. Ill. by Hans A. Meuller. Holt. $3.50.

EITHER radio makes for dispersed and lulled attention to the world about us, or it can be a springboard to books and a deep sense of shared living through time and space This rich biography of a man and musician who has touched us all through many operas, through the Hymn of the Nations, and the Requiem, is one of the events of autumn publishing. It is a moving account of a born musician whose life covered a great part of nineteenth-century European history. It began in the little village of Ronco in the Valley of the Po. It was deeply lived through the revolution of 1848, and 1848 has a great deal to teach 1948. It is a life full of passion for art, for friendship, for humanity, full of dramatic circumstance, famous friends, struggles and triumphs, and endless generosity. Simply written, a splendid introduction to the world of music, of Italian culture, and a glorious admonition to work with integrity, a message to youth in our commercial age. E. E.

River Dragon. Carl D. Lane. Drawings by Charles Banks Wilson. Little. $2.50.

AN EXCITING account of what happened when the first steamboat went to explore the upper Missouri in 1819 and how the Indians received it.

River of the Wolves. Stephen Meader. Harcourt. $2.50.

A STORY of the French and Indian Wars. A courageous American boy and a plucky New England girl are both prisoners of merciless and merciful Indians. A farsighted Jesuit shows them how to escape. C.H.B.

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CONTRIBUTORS

Katherine BREGY, American Catholic author and lecturer, has published many essays and volumes of poems and stories, including the collection, "Bridges."

Wayne ANDREWS is an historian and author of several books, including "Battle for Chicago."

Paul FARRELL is on the editorial staff of the magazine *Purchasing,* and was a member of General Patton's staff.

David BURNHAM is a critic and author of novels and detective stories.

Elizabeth Ann COOPER is taking graduate work at Fordham University.

Max FISCHER, a journalist and foreign correspondent, at present writing for the New York City foreign language press.

Ann HUNTER works with the New York publishing house, Aladdin Books.

Ernestine EVANS was general editor of our last year's Children's Book Number and is a regular critic for the *Herald Tribune Book Review* and other publications.

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